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" The birch, most shy and ladylike of trees,
Her poverty, as best she may, retrieves,
And hints at her foregone gentilities
With some saved relics of her wealth of leaves.
The swamp-oak, with his royal purple on,
Glares red as blood across the sinking sun,
As one who prouder to a fallen fortune cleaves.

" He looks a sachem, in red blanket wrapped,
Who, 'mid some council of the sad-garbed whites,
Erect and stern, in his own memories lapped,
With distant eye broods over other sights—
Sees the hushed wood the city's flare replace,
The wounded turf heal o'er the mill-way's trace,
And roams the savage Past of his undwindled rights.

" The ash her purple drops forgivingly
And sadly, breaking not the general hush :
The maple-swamps glow like a sunset sea—
Each leaf a ripple with its separate flush."

These colours are not too high for the reality ; and the material which might be drawn upon for illustration of our general subject seems well-nigh inexhaustible.

Yet, lovingly though our poets have depicted Nature, as they have witnessed her peculiar aspects in their own land, there is, in her infinite variety, abundant inspiration for poets yet unborn. Our Western World has not yet unfolded half its wealth of sublime and beautiful scenery, most of which has only come to light in the search for more palpable treasures.

LUCY LARCOM.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF A STATUE.



HE profuse "bestatuing" of mediocrity which is now in fashion bids fair to abolish the value of what should be the last and highest honour. A great, a very great man departs, and his image is placed in the forum or public place, to recall him vividly, and, by recalling him, stimulate curiosity and revive the memory of his achievements.

As the public place belongs to the people and is for the people, so it should be with the quality of any image set up there ; representing one who, when alive, had attracted the same attention, and who, standing in the flesh on such a rostrum, would command notice and admiration. Any statue not of these pretensions is an impertinence, as it were, and defeats its own claims to attention ; just as some pretender in real life, thrust into a position for which he is unfitted, finds that it brings him discredit rather than honour. All our cities are being rapidly filled up with bronze men in coats, supported behind by a sort of milestone, with enormous cloaks hanging off and trailing on the ground. Three-fourths are obscure, or men of celebrity in a small class, and therefore unfitted for being thus set up for the crowd. We need only walk down the Thames Embankment to find this illustrated, for we are confronted there with the effigies of Outram, Brunel, and Mill. Of these three it may be said the crowd knows little ; they become therefore bronze enigmas, excite no interest, kindle no feelings, and might as well be away. Nelsons, on the contrary, Wellingtons, Pitts, Foxes, Queens, Kings, and the like, all speak in a language of their own to the crowd. This may be laid down as a broad principle which, however, has its limitation, for there are conditions under which a specialist in bronze may speak to the multitude : the principal of which is, when natural feeling and high Art make the bronze expressive. To see a striking attitude and a face highly significant at once arouses curiosity, and thus interest will be awakened in the pursuits that are the very *raison d'être* of the figure. All this holds more particularly in a great capital like London, in which no obscure or mediocre men should have place, and only those who have done vast service to the empire—a consideration which enters enormously into the artistic value of the image, as not even a Flaxman or Thorwaldsen could lend dignity to a personage thrust into so conspicuous a position without claims. In provincial towns eminent local personages may appropriately find place ; though here, too, the same jealous principle of selection should obtain. Many, such as Birmingham, are fortunate in their statues, which have a grace and quaintness wanting in London figures. Much of this is owing to their being persons of the last century, where the costume favoured effect ; and indeed it might seem a good rule that a couple of generations at least should elapse after the death of the celebrity, before this form of homage is paid. Now the moment a great man dies, subscriptions are collected for a statue, and, within a year or two, he is exhibited in his metal frock-coat and trousers, with the effect of an undue and vulgarising familiarity. Thus we have the late Lords Derby and Palmerston, *cum multis aliis* ; and we may reasonably feel alarm at the certainty that the vast crowd of con-

spicuous men of the second and third rank who now engross attention will be celebrated and their memory embalmed in this mode. In Dublin there are some picturesque statues, mainly the work of Foley, while classic Edinburgh is abundantly supplied with excellent works.

But there can be no doubt but that this over-satiety of statues will defeat its object, and that a city crowded at every turn and street corner with figures will inspire rather a feeling of disgust. To have a good and effective statue there must be many elements : First, a personage of great celebrity and popular gifts ; secondly, it must have a direct reference to an architectural position—the centre of a square or corner where many streets converge or cross ; thirdly, it must be characteristic and significant ; not a mere figure, that is, but a figure expressing the gifts for which the original was celebrated.

There have been so many failures in the making and setting up of statues, even under the most favourable conditions of subject, position, abundant funds, and even of competent artists, and the eye is so much offended by what is presented to it, that it may be worth while inquiring whether, if some simple and not very recon-dite principles were attended to, something far more effective might not be secured. For it is really disheartening to see the vast amount of money and enthusiasm that has been expended in these memorials without producing much greater results than the erection of huge masses of metal or stone blocks, with a label below, and with none of that half-tender, half-grateful sense with which we look on some well-executed portrait or medallion of a relative whose memory is dear to us. In this general failure there is a curious analogy to the style of comedy and acting which is or was lately in vogue, and which would appear to be based on that taste for a low and vulgar realism that assumes the most exact imitation of physical objects is a form of Art. This school, as is well known, deals with what are merely accidents instead of the essentials, and therefore the likeness is rather apparent and on the surface than real. The Robertson comedy, for instance, gives us the gossip of society, the colourless drawing-room manners which are the same in every type, whereas there are, even in fashionable life, *principles* and passions that the true dramatist should seize and analyse, to give a genuine picture of our society. So with sculpture. Many would suppose that if there were some ingenious invention by which a perfect cast could be produced of a human being in everyday dress, with his hair, whiskers, &c., nothing better, as a likeness, could be desired or hoped for ; yet, so far is this from being true, that it is no exaggeration to say that a true artist would give a better "likeness" of such a person in which no single line or surface or curve would agree with any actual line, curve, or surface of the original figure. The reason is, that the mind or soul within, ever in motion, manifests itself by a thousand movements of limbs, of muscles, nerves, and each change within causes a corresponding change without. Hence a cast of the human face could not be a likeness, unless it be assumed that the particular mind within is in a state of torpor, and shows no life or movement. Further, these movements may be roughly "diagnosed" as it were

for practical purposes, as the results of certain emotions or habits of mind; as, for instance, a logical or impulsive being would betray this temper in sharp movements of his body and limbs, which he would use to help his meaning; these, again, would affect the very shape of his clothes, his way of standing or sitting, his walk, &c. And mark the result in a statue, and his operation on the crowd ignorant, perhaps, of the character before it. From custom we associate these appearances with the causes that produce them, and at once are helped to the character of the man. It would take long to work this out in detail, but the principle can be at once applied. For when it is stated that the average statue-maker usually works from a *dressed* lay figure, having first made use of a tolerable likeness for the face—in short, deals with the body in a sort of conventional style—it will be seen that a great portion of the likeness must be absent. The truth is, a face and head that are like, without a body equally like, is no likeness; or rather, is merely the likeness of a face and head: indeed, where even the face is not very like, a striking likeness of the body will often supply the defect. No one who has seen Mr. Charles Matthews perform in "The Game of Speculation" could help being struck by the characteristic individuality of his back and shoulders, while helped by art, costume, &c. Who shall say that such points are considered in our statues? There is, besides, the favourite attitude, not, as is too often the case, represented as almost an eccentricity, but indicated so far only as it represents the mental quality of which it is a physical evidence. But let us now approach the more practical points which should guide the making of a statue.

What was the thought in the mind of the community when it conceived the notion of setting up a figure on a pedestal in the market-place? Why should it be reared so high on a structure or block? The reason is, of course, that it should be conspicuous at a distance, and also have an air of dignity from its high position. But still, until we fix clearly what is intended by the position, there is something arbitrary and even eccentric in the idea of an image being thus pilloried to do him honour.

Is this pedestal a pillar shortened from a great column? or is it simply an elevated portion of the ground on which he might have been standing in his lifetime? Most figure-makers, I believe, assume the former theory: that it is a means of perching the statue at a good height; but the true theory I believe to be, that it is to represent a fragment of the ground. No doubt, when statues crown buildings and balustrades, the former is correct—viz., that it should be placed on some kind of stand; but it is the application of this principle to statues detached from architecture that is accountable for a common element of failure. There is hardly a statue in this country that is not spoiled by its pedestal—invariably too meagre and pillar-like, so as to suggest the idea that the figure is insecure, has but a precarious footing, and requires almost a living power of self-balancement, so contracted is the space on which it stands. The statues of Havelock and Napier in Trafalgar Square are special instances; and the leverage exerted by gusts of wind and the heavy o'er-toppling weight at the shoulders is a parallel to the "displacement" controversy about the ironclads. The constructive mind, to make itself easy, immediately supplies great irons sunk deep in the pedestal, to make all secure. The figures just named are on a gigantic scale, and the pedestals are certainly not in the usual proportion. Apart, too, from the simple effect of meagreness and stint of space, a figure under such conditions should be at its ease, with room, as it were, to take a step, just as a preacher has in his pulpit, or any one speaking from or looking down from some rostrum; and, as was said before, the idea should be conveyed—not too distinctly, of course—that the figure is on some raised place of honour, or portion of a balcony, or the platform of a flight of steps, or some idealised "coin of vantage."

The presence of a little pillar or post, which to secure effect is almost invariably placed behind, shows that this is the true theory; as to "mast-head," and "hoist aloft," such an adjunct with the

figure is surely out of keeping and character. The pedestal, therefore, must be large, solid, and even spacious—a structure, in short. It is surprising how much an inferior statue is improved by a properly-proportioned pedestal, and it will be noticed, in the case of the statues before referred to in Trafalgar Square, that their position is so precarious as to suggest a nervous idea of the slightest movement backward being attended with fatal results.

With regard to this post or pillar, which is so invariably found behind the statue with a cloak thrown over it, it is usually introduced with a view of lending support, and to this end is made to adhere by some mysterious law to the back of the legs. This absurd arrangement is really the cause of much failure; for so Siamese a junction of life and matter is not in Nature. On the other hand, the post or pillar is *de rigueur*, as no one could see a figure without something filling up the background, and the effect of a pair of legs *au jour* with a triangle of light between is bald and unnatural in the extreme. Mr. Woolner's statue of Palmerston has a meagre and unfinished air.

There is a statue—of Goethe, I think, at Weimar—in which the figure leans in an attitude of ease and comfort against a round pillar with excellent effect, doing away with the ponderous and clumsy result so usual in this country, and which destroys all effect when viewed from the side or from the back; for, when the figure is independent of this necessary post, the outline can be followed; not so when it is mixed up with a falling cloak or blanket. A little reflection would soon discover variety and novelty in the shapes of this support, a fragment of balustrade, a corner of a wall, &c.

But the greatest failures have been where the figure is placed seated in a chair. We have only to take a pilgrimage to the Exchange, and visit the effigy of the late Mr. Peabody, which, raised but little above the ground, seems to be presiding or ready to preside at a meeting of the merchants. The position, attitude, all seem conceived with a view to abate any idea of dignity. The person thus "honoured" by a hard fate can only excite grotesque emotions. Not less absurd is the figure of Fox, in Bloomsbury, seated in a Roman dress; but really more like a gentleman taking a Turkish bath. What is the idea of a sitting figure? Not surely to represent what is, after all, but an inferior and artificial attitude meant to restore the human body to strength. It is of course really symbolic, typifying an office of the magistrature, or of peculiar veneration or study, and therefore there was no clear reason why the new statue of Mill, on the Embankment, should be thus disposed. And, on the other hand, the attitude of standing is not, as would seem to be supposed, associated with public speaking only. A sitting figure, like that very fine one of the American hero at Washington, should be almost theatrical in its arrangement. The chair should not be a homely dining-room one, as in the Peabody case, but what Lamb would have called "a glorified chair," a thing of state, a throne, and the figure should sit, as it were, in state. But outside these conditions a sitting figure betokens something of infirmity.

It is surprising what a field of interesting speculation this subject opens, and we need only turn to that wonderful disquisition, the 'Laocoon' of Lessing, to see what profound and important questions are involved in the conception of a statue. Without being in possession of these, it may be said that no sculptor is acquainted with his art. What are the *limits* of sculpture? Where does it begin to trench on the *pictorial*? Should it deal with rest or motion? and, if the latter, what *point* in the motion, the beginning or the full development? To what degree should dress or drapery extend? What ought to be portrayed in marble? what in metal? All this is matter of extreme importance, and regulates the effect, making the difference between a mass of metal after the shape of a man, or a *man* made out of a mass of metal.

[To be continued.]

PERCY FITZGERALD.